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March 14, 2012

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 280

Dear Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and other distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Beth Heller and I am a resident of Woodbridge. I am unable to attend the Public Hearing regarding *SB 280, An Act Revising the Penalty for Capital Felonies*, due to a prior commitment, but I wish to voice my comments in support of repeal.

- The death penalty may cause additional pain, by extending the legal process, and it makes the false promise of finality, which in truth only lengthens years and perhaps decades of painful trials and appeals.
- Many families of victims find the death penalty to be disrespectful to their lost loved ones.
- The death penalty is supposed to be reserved for the most heinous murders ~ I believe these cannot be defined, and that every murder is heinous.
- Additional resources and preparation required in death penalty cases makes these cases more costly to implement than life in prison.
- Life in prison without chance of parole effectively protects society.
- Virtually all civilized countries have abolished state-sponsored violence.
- The death penalty is not applied equally across races and ethnic groups.
- I do not believe that the death penalty is a deterrent. States with the death penalty tend to have higher murder rates than states without it.
- I believe that the death penalty is a form of cruel and unusual punishment.
- Most importantly to me, as long as Connecticut has a Death Penalty Act, there remains the possibility that we will execute an innocent person.

The Woodbridge Democratic Town Committee recently passed a resolution – almost unanimously – calling on the CT General Assembly to repeal the death penalty this year. Please do the right thing – vote to support repeal of the Death Penalty in the State of Connecticut. We cannot be murderers. Thank you for this opportunity to address you.

Sincerely,  
Beth Heller